THE CYPRUS ISSUE: THE ETHNOTERRITORIAL CONFLICT BETWEEN TURKEY AND GREECE IN THE CONTEXT OF EU POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the Cyprus issue as an ethno-territorial conflict between Turkey and Greece, viewed in the context of the European Union's policies. The author applies an analytical approach based on key theories of ethnic conflicts, such as primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism, to explain the dynamics of relations between Greeks and Turks in Cyprus. Within the framework of these theories, the mechanisms of ethnic identity formation and its role in the escalation of the conflict, as well as the influence of foreign policy factors on the development of the crisis are examined.

Particular attention is paid to the historical context of the conflict, including the key ideas of enosis, as a desire for unification with Greece, and taksim, as a concept of the division of the island. These ideas are central to understanding the causes and dynamics of the Cyprus crisis, determining not only the internal policies of Cyprus, but also external intervention, including that of the EU.

The author also analyzes the role of the European Union and the UN as mediators in the conflict, emphasizing their strategic position in the process of Cyprus's integration and their influence on the balance of power in the region. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of contemporary problems related to the possible accession of Cyprus to NATO, which may become a new factor of tension in relations between Turkey and Greece. The interaction of these foreign and domestic policy factors requires a comprehensive approach to understanding the mechanisms of conflict resolution. The work offers a systematic approach to the analysis of the Cyprus conflict through the prism of ethnopolitical theories and international politics, emphasizing the importance of the integration of Cyprus into international structures and the influence of external actors on the solution of the problem.

Key words: European Union, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus Conflict, Greek-Turkish Relations, Turkish Cypriots, Enosis, Taksim.

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Кипр мәселесі: EO саясаты контекстіндегі Түркия мен Грецияның этно-аумақтық қақтығысы

Аңдатпа. Бұл ғылыми жұмыс Еуропалық Одақ саясаты контекстінде қарастырылған Кипр мәселесін Түркия мен Грекия арасындағы этнотерриториялық қақтығыс ретінде зерттеуге арналған. Автор Кипр гректері мен түріктері арасындағы қарым-қатынастардың динамикасын түсіндіру үшін примордиализм, инструментализм және конструктивизм сияқты этникалық қақтығыстың негізгі теорияларына сүйене отырып, аналитикалық көзқарасты қолданады. Осы теориялар аясында этникалық бірегейліктің қалыптасу механизмдері және оның шиеленісуіндегі рөлі, сонымен қатар дағдарыстың дамуына сыртқы саяси факторлардың әсері зерттеледі.

Қақтығыстың тарихи контекстіне ерекше назар аударылады, оның ішінде Грециямен бірігуге ұмтылу ретінде энозистің негізгі идеялары және аралды бөлу тұжырымдамасы ретінде таксим. Бұл идеялар Кипр дағдарысының себептері мен динамикасын түсінуде орталық орын алады, Кипрдің ішкі саясатын ғана емес, сонымен қатар сыртқы араласуды, оның ішінде ЕО-ны да анықтайды.

Сондай-ақ автор Еуропалық Одақ пен БҰҰ-ның Кипрдің интеграциялану үдерісіндегі стратегиялық ұстанымын және аймақтағы күштердің теңгеріміне әсерін баса көрсете отырып, қақтығыстағы делдал ретіндегі рөлін талдайды. Туркия мен Грекия арасындағы шиеленістің жаңа факторына айналуы мүмкін Кипрдің НАТО-ға кіру мүмкіндігіне байланысты қазіргі заманғы проблемаларды талдауға ерекше назар аударылады. Осы сыртқы саясат пен ішкі факторлардың өзара әрекеттесуі қақтығыстарды шешу тетіктерін түсінуге кешенді көзқарасты талап етеді.

Жұмыс Кипрдің халықаралық құрылымдарға интеграциялануының маңыздылығын және мәселені шешуге сыртқы субъектілердің ықпалын атап көрсете отырып, этносаяси теориялар мен халықаралық саясат призмасы арқылы Кипр шиеленісін талдаудың жүйелі тәсілін ұсынады.

Түйін сөздер: Еуропалық Одақ, Түркия, Греция, Кипр қақтығысы, грек-түрік қатынастары, Кипр түріктері, энозис, Таксим.

Кипрский вопрос: этнотерриториальный конфликт Турции и Греции в контексте политики EC

Аннотация. Данная научная работа посвящена исследованию кипрского вопроса как этнотерриториального конфликта между Турцией и Грецией, рассматриваемого в контексте политики

Европейского Союза. Автор применяет аналитический подход, опираясь на ключевые теории этнических конфликтов, такие как примордиализм, инструментализм и конструктивизм, для объяснения динамики отношений между греками и турками Кипра. В рамках этих теорий исследуются механизмы формирования этнической идентичности и ее роль в эскалации конфликта, а также влияние внешнеполитических факторов на развитие кризиса.

Особое внимание уделено историческому контексту конфликта, включая ключевые идеи энозиса, как стремления к объединению с Грецией, и таксима, как концепции разделения острова. Данные идеи занимают центральное место в понимании причин и динамики кипрского кризиса, определяя не только

внутреннюю политику Кипра, но и внешнее вмешательство, включая вмешательство ЕС.

Автор также анализирует роль Европейского Союза и ООН как посредников в конфликте, подчеркивая их стратегическую позицию в процессе интеграции Кипра и влияние на баланс сил в регионе. Особое внимание уделено анализу современных проблем, связанных с возможным вступлением Кипра в НАТО, что может стать новым фактором напряженности в отношениях Турции и Греции. Взаимодействие этих внешнеполитических и внутригосударственных факторов требует комплексного подхода для понимания механизмов разрешения конфликта.

Работа предлагает систематический подход к анализу кипрского конфликта через призму этнополитических теорий и международной политики, подчеркивая важность интеграции Кипра в международные структуры и влияние внешних акторов на решение проблемы.

Ключевые слова: Европейский Союз, Турция, Греция, кипрский конфликт, греко-турецкие отношения, турки-киприоты, энозис, Таксим.

Introduction

The Cyprus issue is one of the most complex and protracted conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean, affecting the interests of Turkey, Greece, the European Union (EU) and the international community. This ethno-territorial conflict, which has been going on for several decades, is characterized by deep political, cultural and geopolitical differences that prevent its resolution. The origins of the conflict go back to the middle of the 20th century, when Cyprus, freed from British colonial rule in 1960, became an independent state. The Constitution of the new state provided for equal rights for the Greek and Turkish communities, but political tensions and ethnic contradictions quickly led to a crisis. In 1974, a military coup took place, supported by Greece, after which Turkey, citing the need to protect Turkish Cypriots, conducted a military operation. As a result, the island was divided: the Republic of Cyprus controls the southern part and is recognized by the international community, and the northern part of the island announced the creation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983, which was recognized only by Turkey.

Turkey views its presence in Northern Cyprus as a guarantee of the security of Turkish Cypriots, as well as a way to strengthen its geopolitical position in the region. Ankara actively supports the TRNC, including economic and military assistance, and rejects any settlement proposals that, in its opinion, may infringe on the interests of the Turkish community. In addition to the ethnic aspect, the issue of the development of natural resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, especially natural gas deposits, is important, which increases tensions between Turkey, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. Greece, in turn, supports the Republic of Cyprus and advocates the unification of the island on the basis of the federal principle. This position is due to Greece's historical and cultural ties with the Greek Cypriots, as well as Athens' strategic interest in the region. Greece's membership in the EU strengthens its influence on international negotiations on Cyprus.

The European Union plays an important role in the Cyprus issue, especially after the Republic of Cyprus joined the EU in 2004. However, Cyprus's membership in the EU, in the absence of unification of the island, has created additional difficulties. The EU is putting pressure on Turkey to recognize the Republic of Cyprus and resolve the conflict, which has become one of the obstacles to Turkish accession to the EU. In addition, the EU is actively involved in energy projects in the region, which exacerbates rivalry with Turkey, especially in matters of maritime borders and gas exploration rights.

The Cyprus issue remains a multidimensional conflict in which ethnic, geopolitical and economic interests are intertwined. Thus, the object of research in the article is the Cyprus conflict as a multidimensional ethnoterritorial confrontation affecting the interests of Turkey, Greece, the European Union and the international community. The subject of the research in the article is the role of Turkey, Greece and the European Union in the formation, development and possible settlement of the Cyprus conflict, including ethnopolitical, geopolitical and economic aspects. The main *purpose* of the research put forward by the author is a comprehensive analysis of the Cyprus conflict, taking into account ethnopolitical and geopolitical factors, as well as the study of the role of Turkey, Greece and the EU in the settlement of this conflict, which is one of the factors preventing Turkey from joining the EU. To achieve this goal, the author presents a *number of tasks*:

1. To analyze the historical background and the main stages of the development of the Cyprus conflict, including its ethnic, political and territorial aspects.

2. To explore the role of Turkey in supporting the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

3. To assess the impact of the Republic of Cyprus' membership in the EU on the negotiation process and the dynamics of the conflict.

4. Identify key factors impeding the resolution of the conflict, including issues of maritime borders, energy resources and international recognition.

Research question of the work: How does the interaction of Turkey, Greece and the European Union shape the dynamics of the Cyprus conflict, and what approaches can contribute to its settlement?

Methodology

In order to achieve the research goal and fulfill the tasks set, an integrated approach will be used, including various methodological tools, which will allow a deep analysis of the Cyprus conflict and the role of Turkey, Greece and the European Union in its evolution and attempts to resolve it.

One of the key methods will be the historical-analytical method, which will provide a comprehensive study of the historical causes and development of the Cyprus conflict. This method will be used to study key historical events such as Cyprus gaining independence from Britain in 1960, the creation and subsequent problems of an independent state, as well as important moments such as the 1974 military coup and the Turkish military intervention. Using this method, it will be possible to identify how these events influenced the emergence of the ethnoterritorial conflict, as well as what long-term consequences they had for relations between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, as well as for the foreign policy dynamics of the island.

A comparative method will be used for an in-depth analysis of the positions of the parties to the conflict. This approach will allow us to examine how Turkey, Greece and the European Union approach the Cyprus issue, what their interests and strategies are, as well as how these approaches have changed at different historical moments. Comparing the political positions of these actors and analyzing their approaches to conflict resolution will reveal contradictions and potential opportunities for compromise. The method will also help to analyze the role of these countries in international processes and their impact on the resolution of the Cyprus issue in the context of broader geopolitical and economic changes, such as EU enlargement, Turkey's role in NATO and the energy security of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The case study method will be used for a more detailed study of individual stages of the negotiation process and attempts to resolve the conflict. Special attention will be paid to the analysis of peacekeeping initiatives, such as UN peacekeeping efforts on the island, and important political developments, such as attempts to create a unified federation. Using this method, it will be possible to assess what was successful in these attempts, and what, on the contrary, led to a further aggravation of the situation. This will not only help to understand what is preventing conflict resolution, but also highlight lessons that can be applied to future initiatives.

Geopolitical and economic analysis will be an important element of the study, given the strategic importance of Cyprus to Turkey, Greece and the European Union, as well as the importance of the energy resources of the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus, as well as the EU, are involved in the struggle for access to marine resources, which aggravates relations between these parties. The geopolitical method will help to analyze how energy resources and control over maritime borders affect the positions of the parties to the conflict and how they determine approaches to settlement.

Thus, the use of the proposed methodology will ensure a comprehensive study of the Cyprus conflict, taking into account all its historical, ethnopolitical, geopolitical and economic aspects. The results of the study will contribute to the development of recommendations for the settlement of the conflict, taking into account the interests of all its participants.

Main part

Analysis of the Cyprus crisis in the context of the main theories of ethnic conflicts

The Cyprus conflict is a complex ethnoterritorial confrontation that has persisted for decades. This conflict, which is based on the contradictions between the Greek and Turkish communities of the island, can be analyzed using conceptual approaches proposed by leading researchers of ethnic conflicts, nationalism and theories of international security. It is important to consider how the ideas of Samuel Huntington, Edward Azar, Donald Horowitz, Barry Posen and Benedict Anderson can be applied to a deep understanding of the causes, dynamics and possible ways to resolve the Cyprus conflict.

Samuel Huntington's work «The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order» [1] focuses on cultural and civilizational fractures as sources of conflict in the modern world. In the context of Cyprus, this approach explains the tension through a civilizational clash: Greek Cypriots identify with the Orthodox Greek culture and Western civilization, whereas Turkish Cypriots belong to the Islamic tradition and the Turkish world. These differences in identity are reinforced by political and historical factors, which makes the conflict not only internal political, but also part of global civilizational contradictions.

Edward Azar, in his theory of «protracted Social Conflicts» («The Management of Protracted Social Conflicts: Theory and Cases») [2], emphasizes that prolonged ethnic conflicts arise from the dissatisfaction of basic needs of groups such as security, political recognition, cultural identity and economic equality. Turkish Cypriots felt threatened by their identity and security under the domination of the Greek community, especially in the context of the latter's desire for Enosis (unification with Greece). This sense of marginal-

ization and the lack of institutional mechanisms to protect the interests of minorities have made the conflict protracted.

Donald Horowitz in his book «Ethnic Groups in Conflict» [3] draws attention to the role of institutional design in the settlement of ethnic conflicts. With regard to Cyprus, attempts to create a federal state in 1960 failed, as the proposed mechanisms of government could not satisfy both communities. Horowitz emphasizes that inadequate institutional structures only intensify the confrontation, which can be observed in the situation with Cyprus, where distrust between ethnic groups blocked any form of constructive dialogue.

Barry Posen in his work «The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict» [4] explains ethnic conflicts through the «security dilemma». In Cyprus, this is manifested in the fact that both sides perceive each other's actions as a threat to their security and identity. For example, Turkey's support for military intervention in 1974 to protect Turkish Cypriots was perceived by the Greeks as aggression, and the desire for Enosis as a threat to the Turkish community. This fear and mutual distrust make compromises almost impossible.

Finally, Benedict Anderson, in his work «Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism» [5], proposes the concept of imaginary communities, explaining how the formation of national identity can lead to ethnic polarization. The Greek Cypriots sought unification with Greece, which contradicted the national identity of the Turkish Cypriots, for whom the priority was to preserve autonomy or even partition the island. These differences in national perceptions have exacerbated the ethnic confrontation. Thus, the use of these theoretical approaches allows not only to reveal the historical and social roots of the Cyprus conflict, but also to understand its stability, as well as the difficulty in finding solutions. These concepts can be useful for developing new settlement strategies that take into account the cultural, institutional and international aspects of the conflict.

The primordialist approach interprets the Turkish-Greek conflict as the result of historically rooted hostility, formed by long-standing territorial, religious and cultural contradictions [6]. One of the key factors in this hostility was the idea of enosis - the desire to unite all Greek territories, including Cyprus, with Greece, which was perceived as a threat by Turkey. During the Ottoman rule 15th-19th centuries, the Greeks considered themselves an oppressed people who sought to restore their independence and national identity. The Ottoman Empire, in turn, feared separatism, which increased repression. After Greece gained independence in 1821, its policy of expanding its borders within the framework of the "Great Idea" became a source of new conflicts. The attempted annexation of territories in Asia Minor during the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–22 ended in Greece's defeat and a forced population exchange that affected millions of people and fueled ethnic animosities.

The idea of enosis exacerbated tensions in the 20th century, particularly over Cyprus. The island's Greek majority demanded unification with Greece, a move supported by Athens but resisted by the Turkish minority and Ankara. In the 1950s, Greek nationalists from EOKA launched an armed rebellion for enosis, leading to escalating violence. The Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 following a Greek coup d'état culminated in the conflict, dividing the island in two, a move that has fueled tensions between the countries ever since.

From a primordialist perspective, the idea of enosis has been the catalyst for centuries of struggle over territory and cultural dominance. The Turkish-Greek conflict is interpreted as inevitable because it reflects deep historical and ethnic differences that cannot be completely resolved.

Advocates of the instrumentalist approach understand ethnicity not as an original essence, but as a tool and resource that is used in the process of competition between groups. Ethnicity itself, in their opinion, is not the cause of conflicts. Ethnic conflict is seen not as a result of incompatibility of group identities, but as a consequence of intergroup rivalry for the possession of economic or natural resources, especially in situations where groups have unequal access to power, wealth and social status.

instrumentalist approach explains Greek-Turkish relations as a struggle for resources, influence and territory, where ethnicity is used by political and national elites to mobilize the population and justify their actions. The conflict in the Aegean Sea is an example of such rivalry. Greece and Turkey dispute the boundaries of their territorial waters, airspace, and rights to exploit natural resources, including oil and gas. Greek islands located close to the Turkish coast are the subject of disputes due to their impact on maritime control. Turkey insists on revising the boundaries established by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, arguing that they limit its access to resources and infringe on its national interests. The Cyprus conflict also illustrates the instrumentalist approach. The Greek side, promoting the idea of enosis (the annexation of Cyprus to Greece), used nationalist rhetoric as a tool to establish control over the island and its economic and strategic resources. In response, Turkey, supporting the Turkish Cypriots, promoted the slogan of Taksim (partition), which implied the division of the island into Greek and Turkish parts. This slogan served not only to protect the rights of the Turkish Cypriots, but also to consolidate Turkish influence in the region. The Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, officially justified by the need to protect the Turkish population, effectively resulted in Ankara controlling the northern part of the island, rich in natural resources and strategically important for Turkey.

Thus, the Taksim slogan has become a symbol of the Turkish approach to Cyprus, which reflects an instrumentalist logic: ethnicity and the idea of protecting minorities are used to justify political

struggle and consolidate control over key resources and territories.

The constructivist understanding of ethnic conflict is similar to the instrumentalist one and is based on the fact that ethnicity itself does not generate conflict. The emergence and escalation of conflicts are decisively determined by the actions of elites who mobilize ethnicity and use it to achieve their own goals [6].

The problem of Turkish-Greek relations in Cyprus is explained through the prism of Joseph Rothschild's theory of ethnic stratification as an ethnopolitical conflict between two ethnic groups - Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, as well as the states of Greece and Turkey, considered as third-party subjects influencing the conflict. Within the framework of this concept, a key role is played by economic, political and ideological resources that determine the success of the mobilization of ethnic groups [7].

The Greek Cypriots, who constituted the majority of the island's population until 1974, had significant economic and political resources, which allowed them to dominate the public life and state structure of Cyprus. Their nationalist movement for enosis, supported by Greece, was based on the ideological basis of the Great Idea, which ensured broad mobilization and support of the population. However, their dominant position caused dissatisfaction among the Turkish Cypriots, who felt disadvantaged and sought to protect their rights. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriots, despite their smaller numbers, effectively used the support of Turkey, which provided them with economic, military and political assistance. The Turkish elites, relying on the ideology of protecting compatriots, actively supported the slogan of "Taksim" (partition of Cyprus), which strengthened the position of the Turkish Cypriots and contributed to their mobilization. The Turkish invasion of 1974, officially justified by the need to protect Turkish Cypriots after the Greek coup, led to the de facto partition of the island. Thus, the Cyprus conflict, from the Rothschild perspective, is an example of an ethnopolitical struggle, where the success of each side depended on their resource potential. The Greek Cypriots, having a numerical advantage and significant economic resources, dominated for a long time, but the Turkish Cypriots, having received external support from Turkey, were able to consolidate their position. The conflict was made possible by the effective mobilization of ethnic identity by the elites to achieve their political goals, which led to the partition of the island.

2 Historical discourse on the issues of bilateral relations between Turkey and Greece: the participation of the UN and the EU

After the end of the Second World War, the demands for self-government in Cyprus continued with renewed vigor. In 1954, Greece joined the solution of the issue, submitting a claim for granting the right of self-determination for Cy-

prus for consideration by UN. Great Britain, realizing that the loss of the island could not be avoided, convened a conference on this issue in August 1955, to which Turkey was invited in order to create a counterweight to Greece. At the initial stages of the development of the Cyprus issue, Turkey took a pro-British position in the negotiations. As a result of a long negotiation process, in February 1959, an agreement was signed between Greece, Turkey, Great Britain and representatives of the Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus. It provided for the granting of independence to Cyprus, excluded the transfer of the island to Greece, and also provided for the provision of two military bases on the island to Great Britain. Greece, Turkey and England acted as the guarantor countries of the new state.

The first step towards the division of the island was the riots and the aggravation of inter-communal relations, which began in 1963. To prevent an escalation of the situation, British troops were brought to the island, and the island was divided by the so-called "green line". Cyprus was divided into the northern part, the majority of which were Turks, and the southern part, whose population consisted mainly of Greek Cypriots. In 1964, it was decided to introduce a peacekeeping contingent of UN to the island [8].

The division of Cyprus by the "green Line" has become a serious prerequisite for the separation of communities and the creation of independent enclaves. In the current situation, Turkey has taken a position on approving the territorial separation of communities.

In 1967, the disengagement went even further: The Turkish community of Cyprus has announced the establishment of the "Provisional Administration of the Republic of Cyprus"[9].

In 1974, a new aggravation of the situation occurred in Cyprus. President Makarios of Cyprus was overthrown by the Greek Cypriot National Guard on the orders of the military dictatorship that ruled in Greece. Turkey, fearing that Cyprus would be annexed to Greece as a result of the coup, began planning a military operation. Initially, Turkey proposed to England, as one of the guarantor countries, to conduct a military operation to restore order in Cyprus jointly. Britain refused, and Turkey unilaterally deployed its troops to Cyprus on July 20, 1974. The operation lasted two days, and Turkish troops gained a foothold in Cyprus. In August, Turkish troops were again deployed on the island. As a result of two operations, Turkish troops occupied 37% of the territory of Cyprus. The line where they stopped became border between the two communities. On February 13, 1975, the establishment of the "Turkish Federal Republic of Cyprus" was announced [10]. This republic has established its own elected Government. Thus, the final separation of communities took place.

The introduction of Turkish troops into Cyprus caused a sharply negative reaction from the world community. The UN responded with a resolution calling for respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned policy of Cyprus. However, Turkey ignored this resolution. The negative reaction was not only from UN. Turkey's Western allies also condemned the operation, with the United States imposing sanctions against Turkey.

Up to 1983, the situation in Cyprus did not undergo major changes. A number of negotiations were held in an attempt to resolve the status of the Cypriot communities, but all of them proved fruitless. In 1981, parliamentary elections were held in Cyprus, first in the Greek part, and then in the Turkish part. Presidential elections were also held in the Turkish part. The division of the island was becoming more and more entrenched. At the same time, UN responded with a resolution dated November 18, 1983, in which it demanded the cancellation of the unilateral decision of the Turkish Cypriots.

The reaction of the Greek part of Cyprus was to appeal to UN with a request to take responsibility for peace and tranquility on the island. UN called on all states not to recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). At that time, an independent political life was being established in the self-proclaimed republic. A referendum was held approving the constitution, and presidential and parliamentary elections were held. Turkey, in turn, contributed to the strengthening of the TRNC by sending Turkish migrants to the island.

Since the early 1990s, UN has been increasingly involved in the settlement of the Cyprus issue. Now UN was no longer limited to mediation in organizing negotiations with the parties.

In turn, in March 1995, the EC adopted a policy program for the development of relations with Cyprus. Moreover, since only Greek Cyprus was recognized by the world community, it was the authorities of southern Cyprus who acted on behalf of the entire Cypriot people in all contacts with the EC. Since the mid-1990s, an active process of dialogue between Cyprus and the EC has begun. In June 1995, the Association Council of the EC held negotiations on the prospect of Cyprus joining the EC. And in July 1995, it was decided to start a constructive dialogue on the issue of Cyprus's rapprochement with the EC [10].

The active participation of the EC in the negotiation process begins at the turn of 1997-1998. On December 13, 1997, an EC conference was held in Luxembourg, at which a decision was made on the possible accession of Cyprus to the EC. However, the European Union recognized only the Government of its Greek part under the Government of Cyprus, and invited representatives of the Turkish-Greek community of Cyprus to join the delegation from this government. The logical continuation of the EC's approach to solving the Cyprus problem was the resolution of March 10, 1998, which stated that the Turkish

Republic of Northern Cyprus is "a fact that cannot be recognized" and that its recognition as a State is an obstacle to achieving a peaceful solution to the issue. In addition, it was decided that the negotiations between representatives of both communities can only take place on the territory of Southern Cyprus [11].

The response to this was a joint declaration by the Presidents of Turkey and the TRNC, in which they stated that such an EC decision undermines all efforts to resolve the issue peacefully, and the existence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is necessary. It was based on the equality of the two sides and called for constructive negotiations aimed at reaching a final solution to the issue. However, the Greek Cypriot side, encouraged by the prospect of joining the European Union, immediately rejected this plan [12]. It was possible to resume negotiations only in 1999.

A new attempt to resolve the issue was the plan of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. He envisioned the creation of a single state of Cyprus, including the entire island of Cyprus. The united Cyprus in its state structure was supposed to resemble the model of the confederation of Switzerland, i.e. to become a free confederation of two states - Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots - united together by a mini-apparatus of the federal government. Representatives of the Greek and Turkish communities would alternately become presidents of the country.

The plan included a federal constitution, constitutions for each State, a number of constitutional and federal laws and proposals for the flag of the United Republic of Cyprus and the national anthem.

The Annan Plan was presented to the parties in November 2002 and was the basis for negotiations until 2004. During this time, it has repeatedly undergone changes, various amendments have been included in it. The last negotiations on it began on February 19, 2004. All contradictions had to be settled before May 1, since the date of Cyprus' official accession to the EC was set for that day. New negotiations were held in Switzerland on March 24-31, as a result of which a decision was made on the date of the referendum on the island - April 24, 2004 [13].

The "Annan plan" was submitted to a referendum. Its results turned out to be quite unexpected: more than three quarters of Greek Cypriots refused to create a single model of the state according to the Annan plan ("for" - 24%, "against" - 75.8% with 88% turnout). Turkish Cypriots voted "for" - 64.9%, "against" - 35.1%, with 87% of those who participated in the voting [13].

The Greek Cypriots were not satisfied with the following points in this document:

1) insufficient guarantees for the security of communities; 2) lack of a clear mechanism for applying the plan; 3) maintaining the Turkish military presence on the island; 4) granting the right

of residence on the island to all migrants from Turkey; 5) quotas limiting the number of Greek Cypriots who are allowed to return to the north of the island and return property lost after the introduction of Turkish The army [14].

At the moment, the division of the island remains. Attempts to reunite communities remain fruitless. The Turkish side insists that the solution to the issue has been sufficiently worked out in the Annan plan and if South Cyprus is not satisfied with any points of the plan, then it is necessary to develop amendments to them, and not reject the entire document.

The Greek side is generally ready to accept the comments of the Turkish Cypriots. In addition, there has been some softening of Cyprus' positions towards the TRNC and Turkey. However, during the negotiations on Turkey's accession to the EC, Cyprus plans to put forward five conditions, without which it will not support its candidacy.

1. Turkey should recognize the Republic of Cyprus as a sovereign State.

2. Turkey should stop the practice of vetoing Cyprus' membership in various international organizations.

Ankara must stop the resettlement of Turkish citizens in the occupied territories of the island.

4. Cyprus demands compensation from Turkey for illegally used Greek Cypriot property in the occupied territories seized in 1794.

5. Nicosia categorically objects to the presence of the Turkish occupation corps on the island [14].

At the time of joining the European Union (May 1, 2004), Cyprus was still divided into two parts. All EC laws and benefits from membership in the union extended only to the Greek sector, and the underdeveloped Turkish part of Cyprus remained outside the EC.

At the same time, when the Republic of Cyprus became a member of the EU, it became clear that for Ankara, the process of resolving the Cyprus problem would fit into the broad context of its relations with Brussels.

The 11th annual report of the European Commission, published on October 11, 2009, assesses Ankara's fulfillment of its obligations to join the European Union. It is emphasized here that the Turkish government should create an "acceptable" climate for negotiations" by starting the withdrawal of troops from the northern part of Cyprus. The main criticism of the authors of the report is directed at the fact that Turkey has been refusing for the fourth year to comply with the provisions of the additional protocol on the customs union with the EC, according to which it has committed to open its air and sea ports to ships of all EU countries, including the Republic of Cyprus. The resolution emphasizes that the unwillingness to comply with the terms of the protocol in full "may have serious consequences for the negotiations on Turkey's accession to the EC" [15].

At the beginning of 2008, important events took place in Cyprus, which created opportunities for a constructive dialogue between the island's communities. On March 21, 2008, Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader M. Talat met, and thus, after a four-year break, negotiations between the leaders of the two communities of the island began.

A total of 71 rounds of negotiations were held from September 2008 to March 2010. The process of developing a common component was quite difficult, and the main difference was that Talat defended the idea of an equal federation of the two communities of Cyprus with a single sovereignty, representation and citizenship, while Christofias advocated Cyprus as a single state, excluding the confederation.

A new round of negotiations under the auspices of UN between the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus D. Eroglu and the President of the Republic of Cyprus D. Christofias was opened by a meeting of representatives of the Cypriot communities in July 2011 at the UN site in Geneva.

In connection with the start of negotiations in Geneva, the President of the European Commission, Jacques Manuel Barroso, made a statement according to which the leaders of the divided communities of Cyprus should urgently take steps to achieve a "mutually agreed solution" and achieve a breakthrough in the negotiations, which will be facilitated by the European Commission. Following the meeting, community leaders promised UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to step up the search for a settlement of differences. The main issue at that time was the determination of the ownership lost after the events of 1974. The Turks agreed to resolve the ownership of the houses abandoned by the Greeks in 1974 on the basis of monetary compensation to the former owners. The Greeks wanted to solve this problem on the basis of restitution — to return everything that had ever belonged to the Greek community in Cyprus. After the meeting in Geneva, the intercommunal talks between D. Christofias and D. Eroglu continued as planned, and at the end of October 2011, both leaders met in New York with the Secretary General of UN Ban Ki-Moon, but no concrete results were achieved [16].

3 Modern challenges in Turkish-Greek relations: energies, integration processes and regional policies

At that time, another factor came to the fore in Turkey's relations with Greece and the Republic of Cyprus, which negatively affected the process of peace negotiations on Cyprus. This destabilizing moment was the energy issue. In 2007, the American company Noble Energy won a tender for exploration work on the shelf of Cyprus.

At the same time, the Republic of Cyprus signed an agreement on the delimitation of its economic zone with Egypt in 2003, with Lebanon in 2007 and with Israel in 2007 [17].

In the notes sent to UN, Turkey stressed that it does not recognize the agreements on exclusive economic zones concluded by the Greek Cypriots. And by sending warships to this region, it demonstrated that it would not remain indifferent to the unilateral actions of the Greek Cypriots. The TRNC has also demonstrated that it does not recognize the Greek Cypriot initiative for a concession to search for natural gas.

In response to Turkey's reaction, the Lebanese Parliament did not ratify the agreement on the delimitation of the economic zone with Cyprus. On September 21, 2011, an agreement was signed between Turkey and the TRNC on the delimitation of the continental shelf in the Mediterranean Sea and the start of exploration work [18].

The Government of Cyprus announced an international tender for the issuance of drilling licenses, and the Turkish Cypriot leadership unilaterally granted a license to work on the Cypriot shelf to the Turkish Petroleum Corporation. In September 2011, Ankara sent warships to support the actions of the Turkish oil company off the coast of Cyprus. Such a show of force by the Turkish Government has caused tension in Turkey's relations with European countries, especially with Greece and the Republic of Cyprus, on the one hand, and between the communities of Cyprus, on the other. At the same time, Turkey would not take military action against the island, since Cyprus has the economic interests of a number of countries that will not stand aside in case of destabilization of the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean. So, Turkey did not receive support for the development of gas offshore Cyprus by the Greek Cypriots, and the conflict over the development of deposits gradually came to naught. Despite this, this conflict will be felt for a long time. After Mustafa Akinci was elected leader of the Turkish Cypriot community in April 2015, and Turkey interrupted illegal seismic exploration in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus, an agreement was reached to resume inter-communal negotiations on May 15, 2015 [18].

The Greek and Cypriot authorities have signed an intergovernmental agreement on energy interconnection, which was approved by the energy ministers of both countries. Within the framework of this agreement, a high-voltage cable will be built to connect the power systems of Cyprus and Greece, with subsequent integration into the European power grid. Cyprus is expected to join the European power grid between 2028 and 2030. Importantly, the project envisages the construction of the longest high-voltage cable in the world, 1,240 km long, which will connect Cyprus with Crete and then across the Mediterranean to mainland Greece and the rest of Europe [19]. This project is aimed at lifting the energy isolation of Cyprus and strengthening Greece's position as an important transit hub for clean energy in Europe. This intergovernmental agreement between Greece and Cyprus on energy interconnection, which involves the construction of the longest high-voltage cable in the world, can be seen as a strategic measure aimed at freeing Cyprus from its energy isolation and dependence on Turkey. Bypassing Turkey, this project allows Cyprus and Greece to strengthen their energy links with Europe while minimizing the risks associated with energy transit through Turkish territory. With this agreement, Cyprus and Greece demonstrate their commitment to diversifying their energy sources and strengthening their energy independence, which is important for ensuring energy security in the region.

Since then, negotiations, as indicated in the document, have been proceeding in a more positive and favorable atmosphere, and the parties have reached a certain understanding on a number of important issues related to the sections of public administration and the distribution of powers, property, and economy.

In May 2015, negotiations between the leaders of the two communities of Cyprus, Akyndhi and Anastasiades, resumed and were chaired by Espen Bart Eide, Special Adviser to the Secretary

General of UN for Cyprus.

In the last months of 2016, Cypriot President Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Akindhi intensified reunification talks and met weekly. In January 2017, a conference was held in Geneva with the participation of three guarantor countries, which ended in vain. Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots considered unacceptable the demand to withdraw the Turkish occupation forces from Cyprus and to cancel the guarantee system, which the Greek side considers an anachronism and limitation of the sovereignty of Cyprus [20].

At the same time, a Conference on the Unification of Cyprus was held in Geneva, as well as a working group working on the development of

specific proposals.

The next meeting at the level of foreign ministers was planned to be held after March 13, 2017, but the negotiation process again reached an impasse. This time, the reason for the discord was the amendment on the celebration of "Enosis Day" in Cypriot schools, adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Cyprus on February 10. The next round of negotiations on the Cyprus settlement in July 2017 turned out to be fruitless again, despite the fact that the discussion of the Cyprus problem under the auspices of the United Nations has been going on for half a century. At a press conference held by Turkish President Erdogan at the G20 summit meeting in Hamburg in early July 2017, he made the following assessment of the negotiations on Cyprus: the Cyprus issue has "critical importance" for the security, future and economy of the Mediterranean region, and Turkey, as a guarantor country, is making great efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem. Erdogan further stressed: «Despite all our efforts that we have made with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the second meeting of the Cyprus Conference, which began on June 28, remained inconclusive» [21].

The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides, has confirmed his country's intention to join NATO and said that talks with Washington on this issue are already underway. One of the main problems for Cyprus is the fact that due to Turkey's objections, the Republic of Cyprus cannot become a full member of the alliance, which limits the island's ability to modernize its army and acquire the necessary military equipment. Christodoulides noted that Cyprus is considering three possible levels of participation in NATO, which demonstrates the country's flexible approach to the issue of accession [22].

Strengthening its defense potential is of particular importance for Cyprus, and the President emphasized that the country is actively seeking ways to improve its defense capabilities both through NATO and the United States, as well as through EU defense programs. Cyprus's geographical location in the Eastern Mediterranean, an area of high geostrategic significance, is an important factor that can affect its role in international security. Christodoulides also said that decisions have already been made to modernize the naval and air force bases on the island, and Cyprus is in talks with both the EU and the United States to strengthen its military infrastructure. Speaking about the deadline for submitting an application to join NATO, the President of Cyprus stressed that, despite caution in public statements, the country is actively moving towards its goal.

These aspects, emphasized by the author in the work, explain the strengthening of close relations between Cyprus and Western countries, including in the context of Western countries' support for the Israeli side in the conflict in the Middle East.

Conclusion

Thus, the Cyprus issue, complicated not only by its internal political, ethnocultural content, but also by the interweaving of multi-vector foreign policy interests and civilizational differences of the parties and states involved in it, reflected the global international clashes of the tenth century. The Cyprus conflict provides an example of new cultural and civilizational problems that stand in the way of integration and peacekeeping efforts undertaken by the international community.

Cypriots face a difficult path to achieve the unity of their homeland. There will be mutual concessions, patience and tact, a breakthrough to a new level of political thinking, reaching new frontiers of political practice.

Analyzing the Cyprus crisis through the prism of key schools in the study of ethnic conflicts allows for a deeper understanding of its complex dynamics and multifaceted causes. The primor-

dialist approach focuses on the deep-rooted historical and cultural differences between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, viewing the conflict as the result of an "ancient feud" between ethnic groups rooted in Ottoman rule and subsequent historical processes. In this context, the contradictions between the two peoples are perceived as inevitable, immeasurably increasing with each new stage of political mobilization and aggravation of interethnic relations. On the other hand, the instrumentalist approach interprets ethnicity as a resource used by political elites to achieve their goals. In the case of Cyprus, this is evident in how the Greek and Turkish elites used ethnic identity to justify their political ambitions, whether it was enosis from Greece or Turkish Cypriot support. The ethnic conflict in Cyprus is thus becoming a consequence of competition for resources, territorial influence and political dominance, and not just a clash of deep-rooted cultural differences.

Finally, the constructivist approach allows us to consider ethnic identity not as an unchanging entity, but as a dynamic and changeable phenomenon that is formed in the context of political and social processes. The conflict in Cyprus can be interpreted as a result of the political mobilization of ethnic identity, when the actions of elites on both sides used ethnic differences to achieve their strategic goals, which contributed to the escalation of violence and the division of the island. Thus, the Cyprus crisis can be viewed as a multi-layered ethnopolitical conflict in which key schools of ethnic conflict theory offer different but complementary explanations: from historically rooted feuds through the resources of power to the dynamic mobilization of identity to achieve political Turkish-Greek relations remain complex goals. and tense, largely due to the Cyprus conflict, which continues to be a source of tension between the two countries. The divided island, where Turks and Greeks have long been in a state of ethnic tension, has become an arena for geopolitical competition. Turkey supports the Turkish Cypriot community and continues its military occupation of the northern part of Cyprus, which has been declared the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), recognized only by Turkey. At the same time, Greece actively supports the Greek Cypriot part and insists on its right to unity with the European Union. This conflict is exacerbated not only by ethnic and historical differences, but also by rivalry for strategic influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey seeks to strengthen its influence in the region, including control over energy resources such as gas fields in the disputed waters around Cyprus, which has led to repeated clashes with Greece and Cyprus over energy policy. Greece, for its part, actively supports energy cooperation with the European Union and other international partners, seeking to include Cyprus in the European energy grid, which has bypassed Turkey. The Cyprus conflict is one of the key flashpoints where the geopolitical and

strategic interests of the two countries collide. Turkey, which aspires to closer ties with NATO and an active role in regional security, faces obstacles in the form of Cyprus's European integration and its rapprochement with Greece. This rivalry is not limited to security issues alone, but also touches on broader issues, including energy, economics and international alliances. The interactions between the two countries in the Cyprus conflict thus reflect not only long-standing historical enmity, but also contemporary geopolitical ambitions, with both sides seeking to assert their influence in the Eastern Mediterranean and on the international stage.

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